2012 Nova Scotia Highway Customer Survey

Highlights Report

Confidential

Reproduction in whole or in part is not permitted without the express permission of **Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal**
NST003-1003

Prepared for:

Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

April 2013

CRA
CORPORATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES
www.cra.ca
1-888-414-1336

Accredited Gold Seal Corporate Member
XRIA

Table of Contents

Page

Executive Summary 1

Study Overview 2

Summary of Findings 4

District Breakdown 4

Detailed Analysis 8

- Overall Satisfaction 8
- Importance of Services 12
- Assessment of Services 17
- Gap Analysis 22
- Department Priority 26
- Rumble Strips 27
- Amount of Driving 29
- Use of Provincial Highways 30
- Highway Shoulder Safety 32
- Roundabouts 33
- Highway Condition Information 35
- Communications 39
- School Zone Speed Limit Changes 42
- Awareness of Department Approaches 43

Figures

Page

Figure 1 – Sample Distribution 3
Figure 2 – Map of Four Districts 4
Figure 3 – Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System (2009/2012) 8
Figure 4 – Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System (2002 Through 2012) 9
Figure 5 – Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System (2012 Only, By District) 10
Figure 6 – Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System (2009/2012, By District) 10
Figure 7 – Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Provincial Highway System (2009/2012 and By District) 11
Figure 8 – Percentage Rating Various Highway Services as Somewhat/Very Important (2009/2012) 13
Figure 9 – Average Importance Scale Ratings for Various Highway Services (2009/2012) 14
Figure 10 – Percentage Rating Various Highway Services as Somewhat/Very Important (2012 Only, By District) 15
Figure 11 – Percentage Rating Various Highway Services as Somewhat/Very Important (2009/2012, By District) 16
Figure 12 – Percentage Rating the Quality of Various Highway Services as Good/Excellent (2009/2012) 18
Figure 13 – Average Assessment Scale Ratings for Various Highway Services (2009/2012) 19
Figure 14 – Percentage Rating the Quality of Various Highway Services as Good/Excellent (2012 Only, By District) 20
Figure 15 – Percentage Rating the Quality of Various Highway Services as Good/Excellent (2009/2012, By District) 21
Figure 16 – Gap Analysis Calculation Example 22
Figure 17 – Gap Analysis (2002 Through 2012) 23
Figure 18 – Gap Scores (2012 Only, By District) 25
Figure 19 – Which of the Following Should be a Top Priority 26
Figure 20 – Familiarity with Rumble Strips 27
Figure 21 – Frequency of Driving on Rumble Strips 28
Figure 22 – Agreement Rating for the Following Statements About Rumble Strips (2012 Only) 29
Figure 23 – Number of Kilometres Driven Per Year 30
Figure 24 – Frequency of Using Main Highways in NS 31
Figure 25 – Frequency of Using Secondary Highways/Local Roads in NS 32
Figure 26 – Agreement Ratings for the Following Statements About Highway Shoulders (2012 Only) 33
Figure 27 – Frequency of Driving Through a Roundabout in NS 34
Figure 28 – Agreement Ratings for the Following Statements About Roundabouts (2012 Only) 35
Figure 29 – Importance of Getting Road Condition Information During the Winter 36
Figure 30 – Importance of Getting Road Condition Information During the Road Construction Season 37
Figure 31 – Sources from which You Obtain Road Condition Information (2012 Only) 38
Figure 32 – Preferred Source of Road Condition Information 38
Figure 33 – Agreement Rating that Electronic Message Boards Are a Good Way to Notify Motorists of Highway Conditions 39
Figure 34 – Contacted Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in the Past Year 40

Figure 35 – Reasons for Contacting the Department 41
Figure 36 – Satisfaction with Information Received from the Department 42
Figure 37 – Heard About Changes to Speed Limits in School Zones that Came Into Effect in September 2012 43
Figure 38 – Awareness of Approach Used to Determine When Different Roads Get Plowed 44
Figure 39 – Awareness of Approach Used Regarding When Salting and Sanding Occur 45
Figure 40 – How You Think the Department Selects Highway/Bridge Construction Projects 46

Executive Summary

Results from the **2012 Nova Scotia Highway Customer Survey** indicate that while the Department is clearly facing heightened expectations from Nova Scotians about the condition and features of their roads and highways, Nova Scotians are also increasingly satisfied with the overall condition of the provincial highway system. In other words, although there are a number of areas where the Department receives high gap scores (i.e., areas that citizens consider important but do not offer a rating of excellent), this is not resulting in a lower overall opinion of the provincial highway system, which is quite positive for the Department.

Having said that, it is also true that the overall condition of the highway system is a concern for many Nova Scotians. Indeed, for those who are dissatisfied with the overall condition of provincial highways, dissatisfaction stems from three predominant reasons: roads are poorly paved/maintained; roads are in poor repair/condition; and potholes on the roads. In prompted ratings, three areas receive the lowest ratings: filling potholes, dust control on gravel roads and grading on gravel roads. On the other hand, the public offers very positive ratings of the amount and maintenance of highway signs on both main highways, and secondary highways and local roads, and the maintenance of bridge decks and railings, and pavement markings.

The Department faces a public with differing beliefs regarding spending priorities, depending on location within the province, and on the amount they drive. Some believe funding should be focused on secondary highways and local roads (a sentiment more pronounced among rural residents), while others believe the focus should be on primary highways (a sentiment more pronounced among urban residents).

This year, a number of new topics were addressed in the survey, including rumble strips, roundabouts, and electronic message boards. These new topic areas identify new services implemented since 2009. Nova Scotians are mostly aware of rumble strips and feel safer using the highway because of them. Nova Scotians have divided perceptions of the safety of roundabouts, and although most feel comfortable using them, there is some confusion regarding the proper rules of roundabouts. Although only one in four have used electronic message boards to obtain information about road conditions, the vast majority support their use.

In terms of receiving information, findings indicate it is important to citizens to have information on road conditions in the winter, and to a lesser extent, during road construction season. The radio is the primary method citizens receive information about road conditions, and there is also a reliance on web cameras. Finally, a number of citizens who contacted the Department in the past year were not satisfied with the information they received, with the top three reasons for contacting the Department being to call attention to a problem, to voice a complaint, or seeking to have work done.

Study Overview

This report presents the findings from the **2012 Nova Scotia Highway Customer Survey** as prepared by Corporate Research Associates Inc. (CRA) on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal ('the Department'). This survey was conducted annually from 2002 to 2009. The purpose of this survey is to gather information to help the Department meet its goals and objectives by evaluating how well services are delivered and identifying areas for improvement.

A total of 2,091 telephone interviews were conducted with adult Nova Scotians, aged 16 years or older, from November 22 through December 19, 2012. Approximately 520 interviews were conducted in each of the Department's four districts (Eastern, Western, Central and Northern: see map on page 4). The counties comprising each district are as follows:

- Central: Halifax and Hants counties
- Eastern: Antigonish, Guysborough, Inverness, Victoria, Cape Breton and Richmond counties
- Northern: Pictou, Cumberland and Colchester counties
- Western: Kings, Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, Lunenburg and Queens counties

The sample was developed to allow for proportionate representation, by gender and age, within each district, with the final dataset weighted based on the 2011 Canadian Census data to reflect the true population distribution.

The overall results for the 2,091 interviews with the general population of adult Nova Scotians would be expected to provide results accurate to within plus or minus 2.1 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples. Within each of the four districts, the approximately 520 interviews would be expected to provide results accurate to within plus or minus 4.3 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples.

The following table presents the actual sample distribution by age and gender, within each district.

Figure 1: Sample Distribution

Location	Age	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Central District	16-30	66	67	133
	31-45	63	69	132
	46-60	74	76	150
	61 and older	51	62	113
	Total Central			529
Eastern District	16-30	51	51	102
	31-45	47	54	101
	46-60	76	81	157
	61 and older	73	91	164
	Total Eastern			524
Northern District	16-30	48	49	97
	31-45	53	58	111
	46-60	75	79	154
	61 and older	72	86	158
	Total Northern			520
Western District	16-30	46	46	92
	31-45	52	55	107
	46-60	75	80	155
	61 and older	76	88	164
	Total Western			518
Overall	16-30	211	213	424
	31-45	215	236	451
	46-60	300	316	616
	61 and older	272	327	599
	Total Overall			2,091

*Unweighted sample distribution

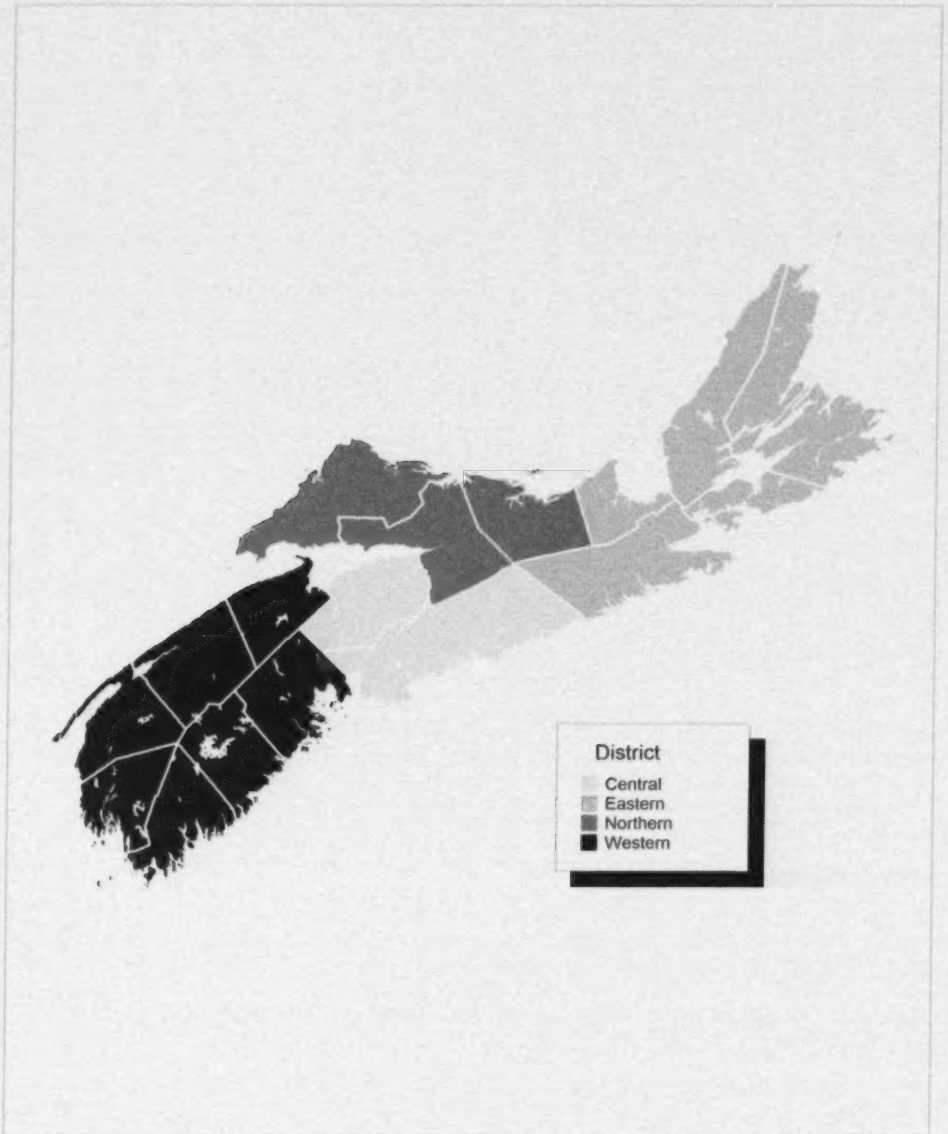
Among all eligible respondents contacted, the response rate was 22 percent.

This report presents detailed findings, with comparisons to past surveys, where possible. Subgroup comparisons are also made, with only statistically significant differences discussed. Please note that a statistically significant change in *percentages* does not necessarily correspond to a statistically significant change in *average scale ratings*. While related, these metrics summarize and statistically compare the data in different ways. For most questions, don't know/no answer have been removed in keeping with the 2009 data and, thus, the sample sizes may not always match the overall sample sizes.

District Breakdown

The map below indicates the four districts which are referenced throughout this report.

Figure 2: Map of Four Districts



Summary of Findings

The following presents a summary of findings drawn from the detailed analysis of the study's findings:

Overall satisfaction with the provincial highway system has improved this year.

Again this year, the majority of Nova Scotians are satisfied with the provincial highway system, which represents an increase compared with 2009 findings.

Nova Scotians generally place importance on all services related to provincial roads and highways assessed.

Residents were asked to rate the importance of sixteen different aspects of highway services. A number of these were new to the 2012 survey, whereas others were the same or similar to previous years. The vast majority of Nova Scotians rated all services as very or somewhat important, which, where comparable, represent increases over 2009 results. The largest increases in rated importance were for roadside brush and tree clearing, and ditches and culverts.

Residents are most favourable toward the amount and maintenance of highway signs.

Residents were also asked to rate the quality of each of the sixteen different services discussed above. Of these, two service factors received quality ratings of 80 percent or higher, relating specifically to the amount and maintenance of highway signs. In contrast, areas with the lowest quality ratings include filling potholes, grading of gravel roads, and dust control on gravel roads.

Nova Scotians have increasing expectations of the services offered by the Department.

A gap analysis helps to identify areas that citizens consider important, but do not consider highway performance to be adequate. There have been increases in gap scores this year as compared with 2009 findings. Services with the largest gaps include: filling potholes, snow and ice removal after a storm, timeliness of the cleanup after a storm, maintenance of bridge decks and railings, and maintenance of pavement markings.

Nova Scotians are divided in regards to where the Department should spend its funding.

Overall, Nova Scotians believe that spending funds to maintain main highways and spending funds to maintain secondary highways and local roads are of equal importance. Focusing on new or expanded highways is considered less important. The public has differing beliefs regarding spending priorities, depending on location within the province. Some believe funding should be focused on secondary highways and local roads (a sentiment more pronounced among rural residents), while others believe the focus should be on main highways (a sentiment more pronounced among urban residents).

Overall, Nova Scotians have a positive attitude toward rumble strips. The strips lead almost all Nova Scotians to feel safer while driving on the highway.

This year, a series of questions were added regarding rumble strips. There is a high level of familiarity with this highway feature, and residents do not often drive on them. In addition, the majority of residents report that rumble strips do not bother them, and furthermore, they feel safer using the highway because of the rumble strips.

Nova Scotians use the province's main highways as well as the secondary highways and local roads.

Overall, Nova Scotians frequently use all types of roads and highways in the province. Those in the Central district are significantly less likely to use secondary highways or local roads in comparison with those from the other three districts. Additionally, those who live in urban areas are significantly less likely to drive on secondary highways and local roads.

At least one in five Nova Scotians feel safe cycling or walking along the shoulders of the highway.

Nova Scotians offer mixed opinions in regards to whether highway shoulders are smooth and level with the roadway. In addition, a small number of Nova Scotians feel safe cycling, walking, or pushing a stroller on the shoulders of the highway.

Residents are mixed about the safety of roundabouts, and there remains confusion about how they operate.

While perceptions of the safety of roundabouts are split, most Nova Scotians feel comfortable driving through roundabouts, and a minority of residents do so on a frequent basis. There is some confusion about the proper rules of roundabouts, as a majority of Nova Scotians agree that *vehicles entering roundabouts should yield to those already in the roundabout*, yet over one-half also agree that *vehicles in the roundabout should alternate with vehicles entering the roundabout.*

Road condition information is important, and residents like electronic messaging boards for this purpose.

Overall, Nova Scotians believe it important that they receive road condition information during both the winter and construction seasons. The three sources that are used most often to obtain road condition information are the radio, web cameras, and the Department of Transportation website. In addition, residents were specifically asked about Electronic Message Boards, and while not one of the main ways residents receive information, the vast majority of residents believe this is a good way to notify motorists of highway conditions.

Satisfaction with the information received from the Department is mixed.

A minority of residents have contacted the Department in the last year, with about one-half being satisfied with the information received during these interactions. The top three reasons for contacting the Department include: calling attention to a problem, voicing a complaint, or seeking to have work done.

The vast majority are aware of speed limit changes in school zones.

Speed limit changes in school zones were implemented in September 2012. Awareness of the changes is widespread among the population.

Only a minority of Nova Scotians are aware of the approaches used to determine snow plowing, salting, and sanding.

Overall, Nova Scotians are unaware of the approach used by the Department to determine when roads are salted, sanded or plowed. In addition, there are mixed opinions as to how the Department selects Highway/Bridge construction projects, with political reasons and the overall condition of the roads/bridges the top responses.

Detailed Analysis

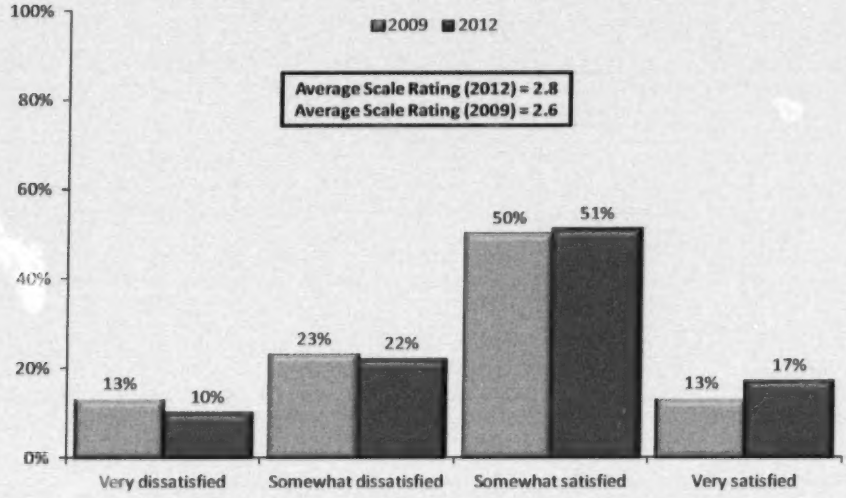
Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the provincial highway system has improved this year.

In 2012, approximately seven in ten (69%) Nova Scotians are either very or somewhat satisfied with the provincial highway system, compared with 63 percent in 2009. Conversely, three in ten (31%) are very or somewhat dissatisfied, compared with 37 percent in 2009. The increase in satisfaction and corresponding decrease in dissatisfaction are both statistically significant, as is the increase in the average scale rating (2.6 in 2009 vs. 2.8 in 2012).

Figure 3

Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System



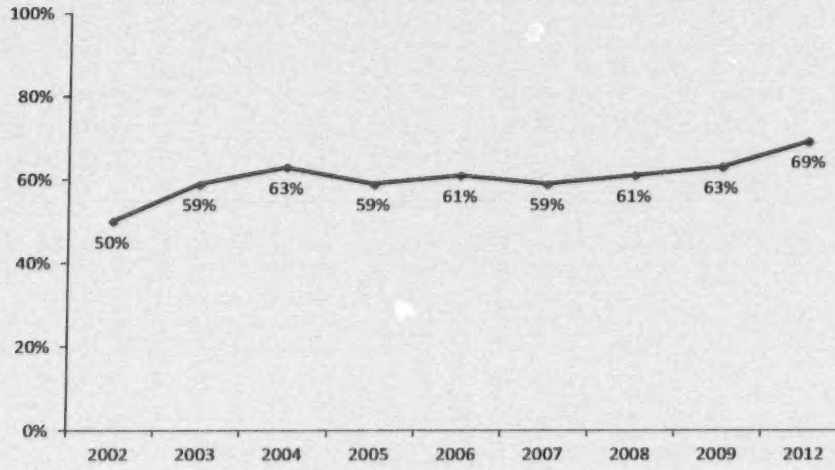
Q.1a: Overall, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the provincial highway system? Would you say you are very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied or very satisfied? (n=2,073)

As can be seen from the following figure, overall satisfaction is at its highest level since the survey has started.

Figure 4

Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System

2002 through 2012 (Very/Somewhat Satisfied)



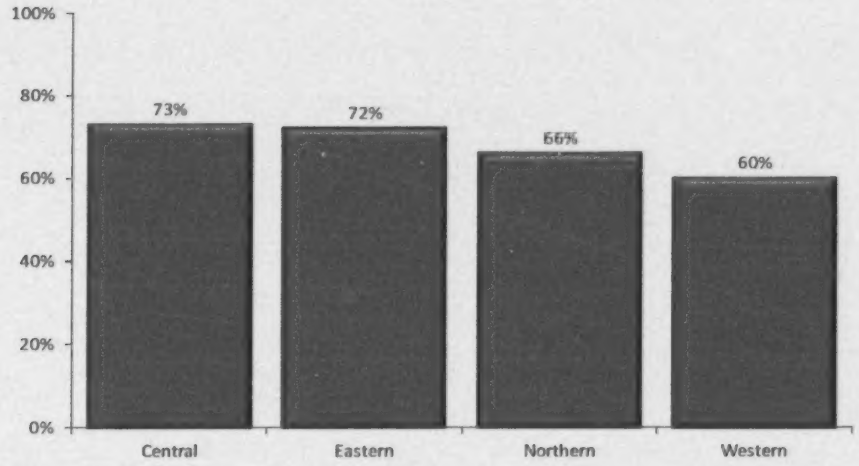
Q.1a: Overall, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the provincial highway system? Would you say you are very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied or very satisfied? (n=2,073)

Across districts, Central and Eastern have the highest percentages of residents satisfied. The percentage satisfied in each of these districts is significantly higher than the percentage satisfied in the Western district.

Figure 5

Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System

% Very/Somewhat Satisfied By District (2012 Only)



Q.1a: Overall, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the provincial highway system? Would you say you are very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied or very satisfied? (n=2,073)

Comparing results within district reveals a significant increase in the proportion satisfied for Eastern district only. Specifically, 72 percent of Eastern district residents express satisfaction in 2012, compared with only 55 percent in 2009.

Figure 6

Overall Satisfaction with Provincial Highway System (Q.1a) % Very/Somewhat Satisfied by District		
	2009	2012
Central	70%	73%
Eastern	55%	**72%**
Northern	61%	66%
Western	59%	60%

Q.1a: Overall, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the provincial highway system? Would you say you are very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied or very satisfied? (n=2,073)
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

Demographically, those in urban areas (75%) are more likely to be satisfied than those in rural areas (65%). Residents between the ages of 16 and 30 (78%) are also more likely to be satisfied than older residents (70% of 31-45 year olds, 67% of 46 to 60 year olds, and 62% of those 61 years of age and older).

Among those dissatisfied with the provincial highway system, dissatisfaction stems from three predominant reasons:

- Roads are poorly paved/maintained (59%);
- Poor repair/condition (51%); and
- Potholes on the roads (46%).

All other reasons were mentioned by fewer than one in ten dissatisfied Nova Scotians. Compared with 2009, the predominant reasons are the same, although the percentage citing each is lower in 2012.

Figure 7

Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Provincial Highway System
Among Those Dissatisfied with the Provincial Highway System – Total Mentions by District (Q.1b)

	Overall		Central		Eastern		Northern		Western	
	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Roads poorly paved/maintained	75%	59%	65%	55%	80%	60%	89%	64%	77%	60%
Poor repair/condition	51%	51%	31%	48%	47%	49%	77%	48%	70%	58%
Potholes on the roads	74%	46%	64%	43%	79%	46%	86%	58%	75%	45%
Snow removal is poor	3%	7%	1%	8%	4%	12%	3%	7%	5%	4%
Not enough divided highways	3%	5%	3%	6%	3%	2%	2%	3%	7%	3%
Tax/gas tax not spent properly	0%	4%	0%	3%	0%	3%	0%	4%	1%	4%
Signs are poor	2%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%	0%	1%
Debris/garbage on the roads	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	3%	1%	3%
Poor lighting	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%
Too few passing lanes	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	3%	2%
Other	32%	12%	36%	13%	31%	13%	26%	9%	32%	13%
Don't know/No answer	n/a	1%	n/a	0%	n/a	1%	n/a	1%	n/a	1%

Q.1b: (IF VERY DISSATISFIED OR SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED' IN Q.1a) Why are you not satisfied? Anything else? (n=667)

The reasons for dissatisfaction are largely similar across demographic groups and there are no significant differences across districts. Those in rural areas are more likely than those in urban areas to mention poor road conditions (54% vs. 45%), while those in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to mention there are not enough divided highways (9% vs. 3%) and signs are poor (5% vs. 2%). Finally, women and those without a driver's license are more likely to mention potholes than their counterparts.

Importance of Services

Nova Scotians generally place importance on all services related to provincial roads and highways assessed.

Nova Scotians were asked to assess a series of factors related to provincial roads and highways in terms of importance. Please note that some of these factors are new for the 2012 survey or have been significantly revised, while others have been asked in previous iterations of the survey. Where possible, results are compared to historical results. In the figures in this section and the Assessment of Services section, n/a indicates that results are not comparable.

The following figure outlines the percentage of Nova Scotians that rated each factor as very or somewhat important. All of the services are perceived as important by the vast majority of Nova Scotians, with the percentage rating each service as important ranging from 82 percent to 99 percent. Two areas did increase notably in perceived importance (rating of very or somewhat important) from 2009 to 2012, specifically, roadside brush and tree clearing (91%, up 16 percentage points), and ditches and culverts (92%, up 14 percentage points). All comparable areas (9) registered at least a slight increase in rated importance that was significant, with the exception of potholes.

Figure 8

Percentage Rating Various Highway Services as Somewhat or Very Important (Q.2a-p)	2009 (%)	2012 (%)	Change (2009 to 2012)
Filling potholes	**98%**	**99%**	**1%**
Resurfacing sections of the highway	**94%**	**98%**	**4%**
The maintenance of pavement markings	**95%**	**98%**	**3%**
Roadside brush and tree clearing	**75%**	**91%**	**16%**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	95%	n/a
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	95%	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	96%	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	95%	n/a
The width of highway shoulders	**89%**	**95%**	**6%**
The surface condition of highway shoulders	**89%**	**96%**	**7%**
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	90%	n/a
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	82%	n/a
Ditches and culverts	**78%**	**92%**	**14%**
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	97%	n/a
Snow and ice removal during a storm	**96%**	**99%**	**3%**
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	**96%**	**98%**	**2%**

Q.2a p: How important would you say each service is to you? Would you say it is very unimportant, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important, or very important?
Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

The following figure presents the average scale ratings for importance for 2009 and 2012. While there are some significant differences between the two years, these differences are small. In fact, no factor changed by more than .2. That said, the differences are statistically significant for resurfacing sections of the highway, the maintenance of pavement markings, roadside brush and tree clearing, surface conditions of highway shoulders, ditches and culverts, snow and ice removal during a storm, and timeliness of cleanup after a storm.

Figure 9

Average Importance Scale Ratings for Various Highway Services (Q.2a-p)			
	2009	2012	Change (2009 to 2012)
Filling potholes	3.9	3.9	-
Resurfacing sections of the highway	**3.6**	**3.7**	**0.1**
The maintenance of pavement markings	**3.7**	**3.8**	**0.1**
Roadside brush and tree clearing	**3.2**	**3.4**	**0.2**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	3.6	n/a
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	3.5	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	3.6	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	3.5	n/a
The width of highway shoulders	3.5	3.5	-
The surface condition of highway shoulders	**3.5**	**3.6**	**0.1**
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	3.4	n/a
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	3.2	n/a
Ditches and culverts	**3.2**	**3.4**	**0.2**
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	3.7	n/a
Snow and ice removal during a storm	**3.8**	**3.9**	**0.1**
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	**3.7**	**3.8**	**0.1**

Q.2a p: How important would you say each service is to you? Would you say it is very unimportant, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important, or very important?
Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

District Results

As can be observed in the following figure, ratings of importance across districts are largely similar, with some notable exceptions. Specifically, those in the Central district are significantly less likely to rate grading of gravel roads, dust control of gravel roads, and ditches and culverts as very or somewhat important. Two other significant, albeit less pronounced, differences were also observed: residents in Central were less likely than those in Eastern or Western to rate the width of shoulders as important, while those in Central were less likely than those in Western to rate surface condition of highway shoulders as important.

Figure 10

Percentage Rating Various Highway Services as Somewhat or Very Important (by District) (Q.2a-p)				
	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western
Filling potholes	99%	99%	99%	99%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	97%	98%	99%	98%
The maintenance of pavement markings	97%	99%	98%	98%
Roadside brush and tree clearing	90%	92%	91%	92%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	94%	97%	95%	94%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	94%	96%	94%	96%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	96%	98%	96%	96%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	94%	96%	95%	96%
The width of highway shoulders	**94%**	**98%**	**96%**	**97%**
The surface condition of highway shoulders	**94%**	**97%**	**98%**	**98%**
Grading of gravel roads	**86%**	**95%**	**93%**	**93%**
Dust control on gravel roads	**77%**	**89%**	**86%**	**84%**
Ditches and culverts	**89%**	**95%**	**94%**	**95%**
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	97%	97%	98%	98%
Snow and ice removal during a storm	99%	98%	99%	99%
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	97%	98%	99%	99%

Q.2a p: How important would you say each service is to you? Would you say it is very unimportant, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important, or very important?
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between the districts.

Comparing ratings of very/somewhat important across 2009 and 2012 for each district reveals a number of significant increases. All four districts have significant increases for roadside brush and tree clearing, width of highway shoulders, surface condition of highway shoulders, and ditches and culverts. Central, Northern, and Western have significant increases for resurfacing sections of the highway, and timeliness of the cleanup after a storm. Central, Eastern, and Western have a significant increase for the maintenance of pavement markings. Finally, Central and Western have a significant increase for snow and ice removal during a storm.

Figure 11

Percentage Rating Various Highway Services as Somewhat or Very Important (by District) (Q.2a-p)

	Central		Eastern		Northern		Western	
	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Filling potholes	97%	99%	99%	99%	97%	99%	98%	99%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	**91%**	**97%**	97%	98%	**96%**	**99%**	**95%**	**98%**
The maintenance of pavement markings	**94%**	**97%**	**96%**	**99%**	96%	98%	**95%**	**98%**
Roadside brush and tree clearing	**68%**	**90%**	**83%**	**92%**	**80%**	**91%**	**81%**	**92%**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	94%	n/a	97%	n/a	95%	n/a	94%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	94%	n/a	96%	n/a	94%	n/a	96%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	96%	n/a	98%	n/a	96%	n/a	96%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	94%	n/a	96%	n/a	95%	n/a	96%
The width of highway shoulders	**86%**	**94%**	**93%**	**98%**	**91%**	**96%**	**93%**	**97%**
The surface condition of highway shoulders	**84%**	**94%**	**93%**	**97%**	**93%**	**98%**	**93%**	**98%**
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	86%	n/a	95%	n/a	93%	n/a	93%
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	77%	n/a	89%	n/a	86%	n/a	84%
Ditches and culverts	**68%**	**89%**	**85%**	**95%**	**87%**	**94%**	**87%**	**95%**
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	97%	n/a	97%	n/a	98%	n/a	98%
Snow and ice removal during a storm	**96%**	**99%**	97%	98%	97%	99%	**95%**	**99%**
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	**95%**	**97%**	97%	98%	**96%**	**99%**	**95%**	**99%**

Q.2a-p: How important would you say each service is to you? Would you say it is very unimportant, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important, or very important?
Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

Nova Scotian males and females differ significantly on their ratings of the importance of resurfacing sections of the highway, the maintenance of pavement markings including yellow and white lines, roadside brush and tree clearing, the amount of highway signs on main highways and on secondary highways and local roads, the maintenance of highway signs, the width of highway shoulders, the grading of gravel roads, dust control on gravel roads, ditches and culverts, and the timeliness of the cleanup after a storm. In all cases men are significantly more likely to declare the service is unimportant.

Demographically, Nova Scotians living in urban areas are significantly more likely than those in rural areas to declare that the following services are unimportant: filling potholes, roadside brush and tree clearing, the width of the highway shoulders, the surface condition of highway shoulders, grading of gravel roads, dust control on gravel roads, ditches and culverts, and timeliness of a cleanup after a storm.

In regards to having a driver's license, those without a license are significantly more likely to declare it is unimportant to resurface sections of the highway. In contrast, those with a license are significantly more

likely to declare that the following services are unimportant: roadside brush and tree clearing, the amount of highway signs, grading of gravel roads, dust control on gravel roads, and ditches and culverts.

Assessment of Services

Residents are most favourable toward the amount and maintenance of highway signs.

Nova Scotians were asked to rate the quality of service for each of the highway services they rated in terms of importance. Results demonstrate that two areas have 80 percent or more of Nova Scotians rating it as excellent or good. Specifically, these are the amount of highways signs on main highways and the maintenance of highway signs on main highways.

The areas where fewer than 50 percent rate the service as excellent or good include: filling potholes, grading of gravel roads, and dust control on gravel roads. All other areas had between 50 and 72 percent rating it as excellent or good.

In 2012, there were statistically significant decreases in four of the nine categories compared to 2009, specifically, in the maintenance of pavement markings (63%, down 6 percentage points), roadside brush and tree clearing (56%, down 10 points), snow and ice removal during a storm (59%, down 4 points), and timeliness of the cleanup after a storm (61%, down 4 points). One area had a statistically significant increase: the width of highway shoulders (56%, up 4 points).

Figure 12

Percentage Rating the Quality of Various Highway Services as Good or Excellent (Q.3a-p)

	2009 (%)	2012 (%)	Change (2009 to 2012)
Filling potholes	26%	24%	-2%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	49%	50%	1%
The maintenance of pavement markings	69%	63%	-6%
Roadside brush and tree clearing	66%	56%	-10%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	82%	n/a
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	69%	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	81%	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	72%	n/a
The width of highway shoulders	52%	56%	4%
The surface condition of highway shoulders	49%	52%	3%
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	44%	n/a
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	43%	n/a
Ditches and culverts	59%	58%	-1%
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	64%	n/a
Snow and ice removal during a storm	63%	59%	-4%
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	65%	61%	-4%

Q.3a p: Overall, would you say the quality or level of service being provided is poor, fair, good, or excellent?
Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

The following figure presents the average scale ratings for assessment of services for 2009 and 2012. There are statistically significant decreases, albeit small, in average scale ratings for filling potholes, maintenance of pavement markings, roadside brush and tree clearing, snow and ice removal during a storm, and timeliness of cleanup after a storm.

Figure 13

Average Assessment Scale Ratings for Various Highway Services (Q.3a-p)			
	2009	2012	Change (2009 to 2012)
Filling potholes	**2.0**	**1.9**	**-0.1**
Resurfacing sections of the highway	2.4	2.4	-
The maintenance of pavement markings	**2.8**	**2.7**	**-0.1**
Roadside brush and tree clearing	**2.7**	**2.5**	**-0.2**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	3.0	n/a
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	3.0	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	2.9	n/a
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	2.8	n/a
The width of highway shoulders	2.5	2.5	-
The surface condition of highway shoulders	2.4	2.4	-
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	2.3	n/a
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	2.3	n/a
Ditches and culverts	2.5	2.5	-
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	2.6	n/a
Snow and ice removal during a storm	**2.7**	**2.6**	**-0.1**
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	**2.7**	**2.6**	**-0.1**

Q.3a p: Overall, would you say the quality or level of service being provided is poor, fair, good, or excellent?
Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

District Results

The following table shows the percentage rating each service as excellent or good by district. Comparisons of these reveal relative similarity across districts, with the exception of six significant differences. Specifically:

- Central has a higher proportion rating resurfacing of the highway as excellent/good versus Western;
- Central has a higher proportion rating roadside brushing and clearing as excellent/good versus Western and Northern;
- Eastern has a higher proportion rating the amount of highway signs on secondary highways as excellent/good compared with Central;
- Western has a lower proportion rating the amount of highway signs on main highways as excellent/good compared with all three other districts;
- Western has a lower proportion rating the surface conditions of highway shoulders as excellent/good compared with Central and Eastern; and

- Western has a lower proportion rating the grading of gravel roads as excellent/good compared with Central.

Figure 14

Percentage Rating the Quality of Various Highway Services as Good or Excellent (by District) (Q.3a-p)

	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western
Filling potholes	26%	24%	20%	21%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	**54%**	**50%**	**50%**	**43%**
The maintenance of pavement markings	62%	63%	64%	64%
Roadside brush and tree clearing	**62%**	**55%**	**51%**	**49%**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	**82%**	**84%**	**85%**	**76%**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	**67%**	**76%**	**70%**	**69%**
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	82%	82%	82%	77%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	72%	73%	70%	70%
The width of highway shoulders	57%	55%	53%	54%
The surface condition of highway shoulders	**56%**	**55%**	**51%**	**43%**
Grading of gravel roads	**47%**	**44%**	**42%**	**38%**
Dust control on gravel roads	46%	43%	38%	39%
Ditches and culverts	59%	61%	55%	56%
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	65%	67%	59%	63%
Snow and ice removal during a storm	60%	62%	58%	56%
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	61%	63%	61%	59%

Q.3a p: Overall, would you say the quality or level of service being provided is poor, fair, good, or excellent?
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between the districts.

Comparing results within districts between 2009 and 2012 reveals significant differences in the proportion rating the service as excellent or good on eight of the nine comparable variables, but not in every district.

Eastern has statistically significant increases in three areas: width of highway shoulders (55%, up 12 percentage points), surface condition of highway shoulders (55%, up 13 percentage points), and ditches and culverts (61%, up 10 percentage points).

Northern had a statistically significant improvement in resurfacing sections of the highway (50%, up 8 percentage points), but a decline in maintenance of pavement markings (64%, down 8 percentage points), roadside brush and clearing (51%, down 10 percentage points), and snow and ice removal during a storm (58%, down 8 percentage points).

Western had statistically significant declines in four areas: maintenance of pavement markings (64%, down 8 percentage points), roadside brush and tree clearing (49%, down 11 percentage points), snow

and ice removal after a storm (56%, down 8 percentage points), and timeliness of the cleanup after a storm (59%, down 8 percentage points).

Central had statistically significant declines in two areas: maintenance of pavement markings (62%, down 6 percentage points) and roadside brush and tree clearing (62%, down 11 percentage points).

Figure 15

Percentage Rating the Quality of Various Highway Services as Good or Excellent (by District) (Q.3a-p)

	Central		Eastern		Northern		Western	
	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Filling potholes	28%	26%	23%	24%	24%	20%	25%	21%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	55%	54%	44%	50%	**42%**	**50%**	46%	43%
The maintenance of pavement markings	**68%**	**62%**	65%	63%	**76%**	**68%**	**72%**	**64%**
Roadside brush and tree clearing	**73%**	**62%**	60%	55%	**61%**	**51%**	**60%**	**49%**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	82%	n/a	84%	n/a	85%	n/a	76%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	67%	n/a	76%	n/a	70%	n/a	69%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	82%	n/a	82%	n/a	82%	n/a	77%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	72%	n/a	73%	n/a	70%	n/a	70%
The width of highway shoulders	57%	57%	**48%**	**55%**	52%	53%	49%	54%
The surface condition of highway shoulders	54%	56%	**42%**	**55%**	49%	51%	47%	43%
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	47%	n/a	44%	n/a	42%	n/a	38%
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	46%	n/a	43%	n/a	38%	n/a	39%
Ditches and culverts	63%	59%	**51%**	**61%**	57%	55%	59%	56%
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	65%	n/a	67%	n/a	59%	n/a	63%
Snow and ice removal during a storm	62%	60%	60%	62%	**66%**	**58%**	**64%**	**56%**
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	63%	61%	64%	66%	67%	61%	**67%**	**59%**

Q.3a p: Overall, would you say the quality or level of service being provided is poor, fair, good, or excellent?
Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

Females are significantly more likely to rate the quality of service provided in regards to filling potholes as poor/fair in comparison to males. Those who live in rural areas are significantly more like to rate the quality of service as poor/fair for the following services: filling potholes, resurfacing sections of the highway, roadside brush and tree clearing, the width of highway shoulders, the surface condition of highway shoulders, grading of gravel roads, and dust control on gravel roads.

In terms of having a driver's license, those with a license are significantly more likely than those without a license to declare that the quality of service as poor/fair for the following services: filling potholes, roadside brush and tree clearing, and grading of gravel roads.

Gap Analysis

Nova Scotians have increasing expectations of the services offered by the Department.

A gap analysis typically involves the comparison of importance ratings and perception of performance ratings. Such an analysis compares expectations on a set of service factors with an organization's performance on those factors. In conducting a gap analysis, factors can be prioritized so as to identify those factors in which there is a gap in performance, that is, areas in which the organization is not meeting expectations, thereby indicating the particular service aspects the Department could focus upon to better serve the population. Indeed, an important aspect of calculating gap scores is that they allow for a rank ordering of issues that could be addressed.

Similar to previous years, gap scores were thus calculated as the percentage of Nova Scotians who rate a factor as *very important* but performing *less than excellent* in terms of service on that factor. Higher gap scores indicate greater gaps between expectation and performance, and represent areas in which attention could be focused to improve residents' perceptions of service.

Figure 16

Gap Analysis Calculation: Example

Filling Potholes			
	Excellent	**Not Excellent**	**Total**
Very important	45	1,809	1,854
Not very important	11	212	223
Total	56	2,021	2,077

As illustrated in the preceding table, 1,854 Nova Scotians rate filling potholes as a very important aspect when evaluating the services provided. Of those 1,854 residents, 1,809 do not rate the filling of potholes as excellent. Thus, out of all 2,077 Nova Scotians surveyed, 1,809 believe filling potholes is very important, but do not rate the provision of service as excellent, producing a gap score of 1,809/2,077 = **87 percent**. In other words, close to nine in ten Nova Scotians are of the opinion that filling potholes is very important but the Department is not meeting their expectations in this regard.

The gap scores for 2012 range from 39 percent for dust control on gravel roads and tree clearing to 87 percent for filling potholes. The largest gaps were for:

- Filling potholes (87%)
- Snow and ice removal after a storm (79%)
- Timeliness of the cleanup after a storm (75%)
- Maintenance of bridge, decks and railings (73%)
- Maintenance of pavement markings (72%)

Two areas had gap scores below 50 percent, specifically:

- Dust control on gravel roads (39%)
- Roadside brush and tree clearing (48%)

The table below presents the gaps from 2002 onward, with significance testing between 2009 and 2012 results. In six of the nine areas comparable to 2009, significant differences were observed, with significant differences bolded in the table below. Of particular note, the gap score for timeliness of the cleanup after a storm increased 14 percentage points from 2009 to 2012.

Figure 17

Gap Analysis (2002 – 2012)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2012
Filling potholes	88%	85%	86%	86%	82%	91%	87%	86%	87%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	78%	68%	71%	69%	70%	81%	71%	**62%**	**69%**
The maintenance of pavement markings	79%	74%	68%	73%	69%	81%	64%	**65%**	**72%**
Roadside brush and tree clearing	55%	51%	48%	51%	52%	61%	47%	**43%**	**48%**
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	54%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	53%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	58%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	54%
The width of highway shoulders	71%	65%	67%	59%	62%	75%	64%	58%	57%
The surface condition of highway shoulders	72%	67%	68%	63%	64%	77%	66%	62%	63%
Grading of gravel roads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	54%
Dust control on gravel roads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	39%
Ditches and culverts	62%	51%	50%	48%	43%	65%	50%	**45%**	**51%**
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	73%
Snow and ice removal during a storm	82%	75%	78%	73%	70%	80%	71%	**71%**	**79%**
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	n/a	n/a	75%	71%	71%	75%	68%	**61%**	**75%**

Note: N/A indicates item is new or revised and tracking data is not available.
Note: Bolded numbers indicate statistically significant differences between 2009 and 2012.

District Gap Analysis

Comparing gap scores across districts reveals that Central tends to perform slightly better, that is, it most often has the lowest gap scores. The differences between Central and other districts is most pronounced for roadside brush and tree clearing, grading of gravel roads, dust control on gravel roads and ditches and culverts. Meanwhile, Eastern has the highest gap score in ten areas, Western in five areas, and Northern in one area.

Of note, the top five gap scores (bolded in the table below) in each district are the same as the top five gap scores overall. Specifically, they are:

- Filling potholes
- Snow and ice removal during a storm
- Timeliness of post-storm cleanup
- Maintenance of bridge, decks and railings
- Maintenance of pavement markings

Eastern district also has resurfacing of highway sections as tied for fifth.

In terms of the lowest gap scores across districts, many of the areas tend to be the same (see italicized areas in the following figure). Roadside brush and tree clearing and dust control on gravel areas are among the lowest five gap scores for all four districts, while amount of highway signage on main highways and secondary highways, maintenance of highway signage on secondary highways, and ditches and culverts are among the lowest gap scores for three of the four districts. The only district that has grading of gravel roads among the lowest gap scores is Central district.

Specifically, the lowest gap scores for Central include:

- Dust control on gravel roads
- Roadside brush and tree clearing
- Ditches and culverts
- Grading of gravel roads
- Maintenance of highway signs on secondary and local roads

The lowest gap scores for Eastern include:

- Dust control on gravel roads
- Amount of signs on main highways
- Amount of signs on secondary highways
- Roadside brush and tree clearing
- Ditches and culverts

The lowest gap scores for Northern include:

- Dust control on gravel roads
- Roadside brush and tree clearing

- Amount of signs on main highways
- Amount of signs on secondary highways
- Maintenance of highway signs on secondary and local roads

The lowest gap scores for Western include:

- Dust control on gravel roads
- Ditches and culverts
- Roadside brush and tree clearing
- Amount of signs on main highways
- Amount of signs on secondary highways
- Maintenance of highway signs on secondary and local roads

Figure 18

Gap Scores (by District) (Q.3a-p)				
	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western
Filling potholes	85%	90%	88%	88%
Resurfacing sections of the highway	67%	72%	73%	70%
The maintenance of pavement markings	70%	74%	74%	73%
Roadside brush and tree clearing	43%	53%	48%	54%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125	54%	56%	54%	55%
The amount of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highway and local roads	53%	55%	49%	54%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on main highways	56%	62%	56%	60%
The maintenance of highway signs such as speed limit signs, road exit signs, and so forth on secondary highways and local roads	51%	59%	55%	54%
The width of highway shoulders	53%	63%	58%	59%
The surface condition of highway shoulders	59%	68%	66%	67%
Grading of gravel roads	46%	59%	57%	64%
Dust control on gravel roads	34%	48%	41%	43%
Ditches and culverts	45%	57%	56%	55%
The maintenance of bridge decks and railings	71%	72%	75%	75%
Snow and ice removal during a storm	78%	79%	81%	82%
Timeliness of the clean up after a storm	72%	76%	77%	79%

Note: Italics indicate the smallest gap scores within each district; underline indicates the largest gap scores within each district.

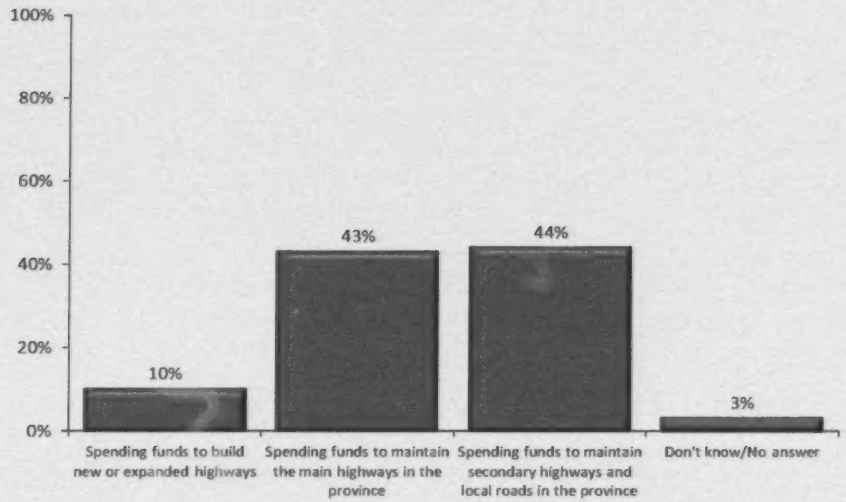
Department Priority

Nova Scotians are divided in regards to where the Department should spend its funding.

An equal proportion of Nova Scotians believe that spending funds to maintain the main highways in the province and spending funds to maintain secondary highways and local roads in the province should be the top priority of the Department of Transportation (43% and 44%). In contrast, only one in ten believe spending funds to build new or expanded highways should be the top priority of the Department (10%).

Figure 19

Which of the Following Should be a Top Priority



Q.4c: In your opinion, which one of the following do you think should be the top priority of the Department of Transportation? Should it be...: (n=2,091)

When comparing districts, people who live in the Central district are more likely than those elsewhere to believe spending should be for the main highways in the province.

Those who live in urban areas are more likely to believe the top priorities should be maintaining the main highways, and building new or expanded highways, while those who live in rural areas are more likely to believe the main priority should be secondary or local roads. Those with a driver's license are more likely than those without to believe main highways should be a priority.

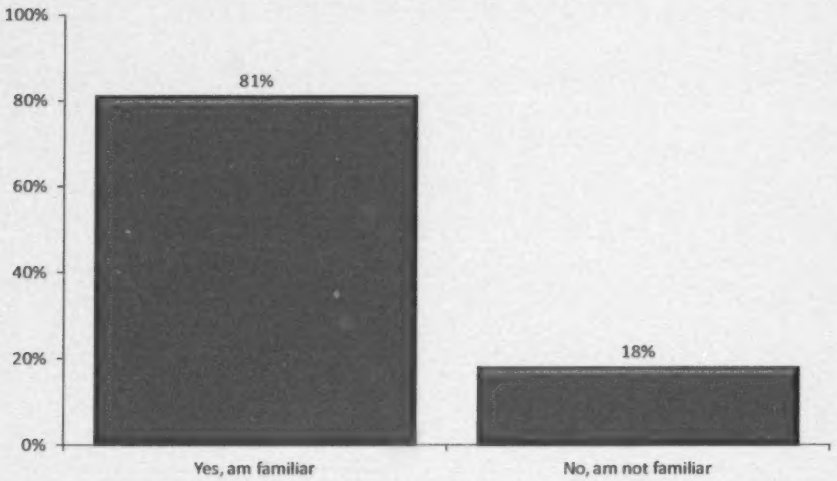
Rumble Strips

Overall, Nova Scotians have a positive attitude towards rumble strips. The strips lead almost all Nova Scotians to feel safer while driving on the highway.

Eight in ten Nova Scotians declare they are familiar with driving on roads with grooved 'rumble strips' along the edge or the centre of the road (81%). Those who drive less than 1,000 kilometres, rural residents, and those in the Northern and Western areas, males and those with a driver's license are more likely to be familiar with rumble strips.

Figure 20

Familiarity with Rumble Strips



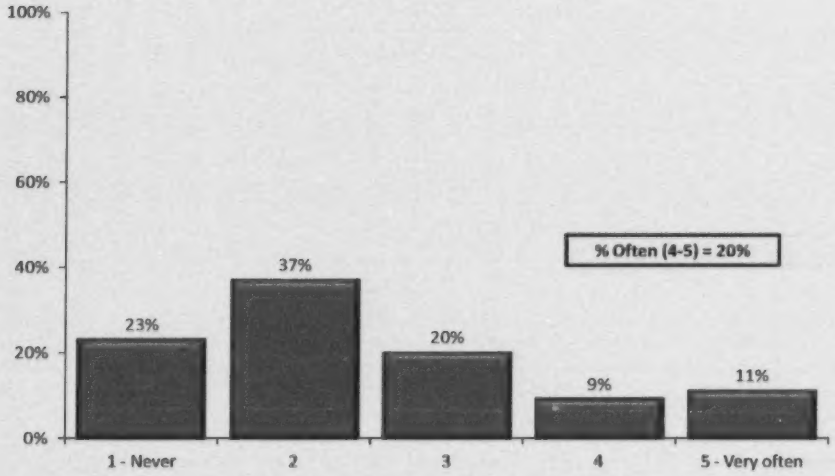
Q.5: Are you familiar with driving on roads with grooved "rumble strips" along the edge or the centre of the road? We are not referring to the straight grooves that go across roadways to alert you to an upcoming change in the road such as a toll booth, we are referring instead only to those positioned along the edge or the centre of the road. (n=2,091)

Two in ten Nova Scotians often drive on the rumble strips (20%). Those who drive over 30,000 kilometres per year, those in rural areas, and males are significantly more likely to have very often driven on rumble strips.

Figure 21

Frequency of Driving on Rumble Strips

Scale of 1-5, 1 = Never and 5 = Very Often, Excluding Those Not Familiar in Q.5



Q.6: [DO NOT ASK IF NOT FAMILIAR IN Q.5] Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "never" and 5 means "very often," how often in a year would you say you have accidentally or intentionally driven on rumble strips? (n=1,685)

Nova Scotians familiar with rumble strips were asked a series of questions pertaining to the strips. A small majority agree that they were sleepy and they hit the rumble strips which alerted them (55%), whereas almost one-half disagree (45%). Meanwhile, a large majority of Nova Scotians agree that the rumble strips warned them when they were distracted on the highway (84%). Almost all Nova Scotians agree that they feel safer using the highway because of rumble strips (90%). Over eight in ten Nova Scotians disagree that they do not like the rumble strips because of the noise made when they drive over them (85%). A high majority of Nova Scotians agree that rumble strips do not bother them at all (89%). Ninety-three percent of Nova Scotians agree that the centre line rumble strips help people from crossing into incoming traffic.

Figure 22

Agreement Ratings for the Following Statements About Rumble Strips (Q.7a-f) 2012 Only (Overall %)				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was sleepy and I hit the rumble strips and they alerted me (n=1,356)	17%	28%	32%	23%
The rumble strips have warned me when I was distracted on the highway (n=1,589)	4%	12%	49%	35%
I feel safer using the highway because of the rumble strips (n=1,681)	2%	7%	50%	40%
I don't like the rumble strips because of the noise made when I drive over them (n=1,672)	37%	48%	11%	4%
Rumble strips don't bother me at all (n=1,674)	3%	8%	48%	40%
I feel the centre line rumble strips help people from crossing into oncoming traffic (n=1,613)	2%	5%	46%	47%

Q.7a-f: [DO NOT ASK IF NOT FAMILIAR IN Q.5] Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following general statements about rumble strips.

Were sleepy and hit the rumble strips: Males, those without a driver's license, and those in rural areas, are significantly more likely to have been sleepy and hit the rumble strips and been alerted.

Rumble strips warned them when they were distracted: Those who drive less than 1,000 kilometres per year are significantly more likely to disagree that they were distracted than those who drive more than 1,000 kilometres.

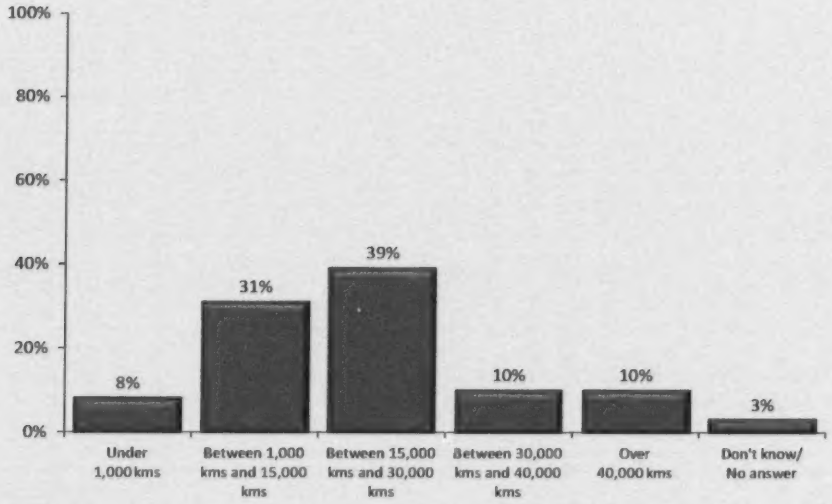
Noise from rumble strips: Those without a driver's license and those in rural areas are significantly more likely to agree that they do not like the strips because of the noise.

Amount of Driving

The majority of Nova Scotians drive between 1,000 and 30,000 kilometres per year. Specifically, one in ten drive under 1,000 kilometres per year (8%), while three in ten drive between 1,000 and 15,000 (31%). Four in ten drive between 15,000 and 30,000 (39%), and the remainder drive at least 30,000 kilometres per year. Those in the age group 61 or over are significantly more likely to have driven between 1,000 and 15,000 kilometres than other age groups. Males are significantly more likely to have driven more than 15,000 kilometres in comparison with females. Urban residents are more likely to drive under 1,000 kilometres than rural residents. Finally, when comparing the 2009 survey to the 2012 survey, 2012 respondents are significantly more likely to have driven between 15,000 and 30,000 kilometres.

Figure 23

Number of Kilometres Driven Per Year



Q.10: Approximately how many kilometres per year do you drive? Is it: (n=2,091)

Use of Provincial Highways

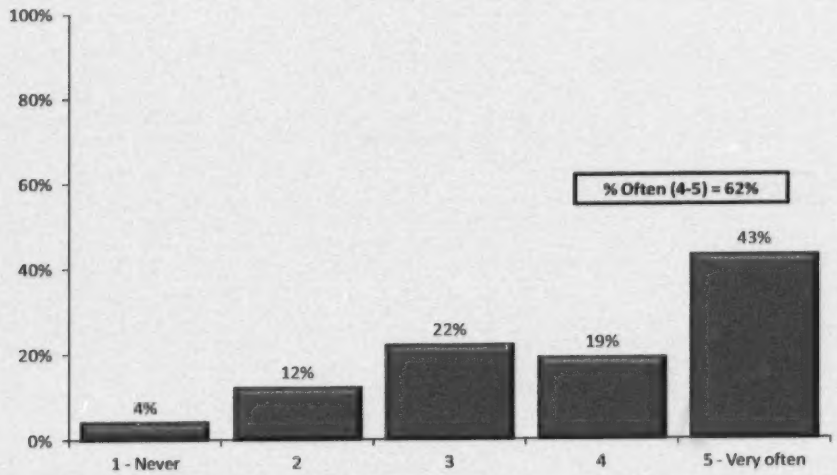
Nova Scotians use the province's main highways as well as the secondary highways and local roads.

A majority of Nova Scotians often use the main highways in Nova Scotia (62%). Males are significantly more likely to often use the main highways in Nova Scotia in comparison with females. Also, those who drive less than 1,000 kilometres per year are significantly more likely to have never used the main highways in comparison with those who drive more. Finally, those who drive 30,000 kilometres or more per year are more likely to have often used the main highways in comparison with those who drive less.

Figure 24

Frequency of Using Main Highways in NS

Scale of 1-5, 1 = Never and 5 = Very Often



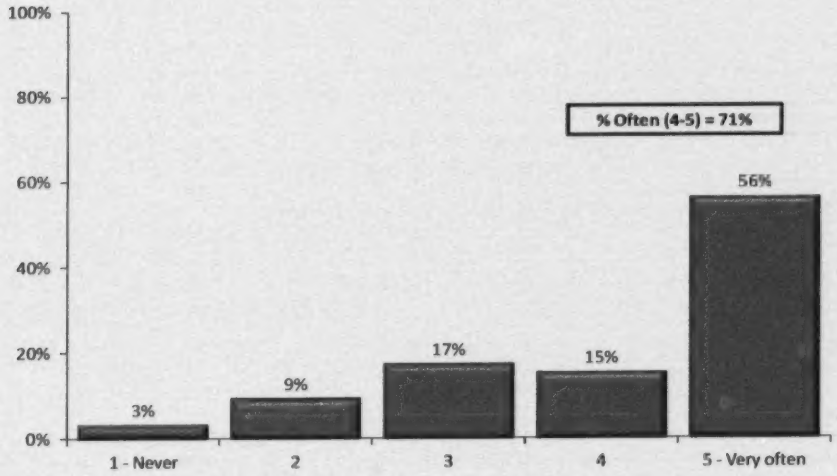
Q.11: How often do you use the main highways in Nova Scotia, for example, Highway 102, 104, or 125? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "never" and 5 means "very often." (n=2,063)

The majority of Nova Scotians often use the secondary highways or local roads in Nova Scotia (71%). Across districts, those from the Central district are significantly more likely to not use secondary highways or local roads in comparison with those from the other three districts. Meanwhile, those who drive less than 15,000 kilometres differ significantly from those who drive more in regards to never driving on secondary highways or local roads. Those who live in rural areas are significantly more likely to drive on secondary highways and local roads than those who live in urban areas.

Figure 25

Frequency of Using Secondary Highways/Local Roads in NS

Scale of 1-5, 1 = Never and 5 = Very Often



Q.12: And how often do you use the secondary highways or local roads in the province? Again, please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "never" and 5 means "very often." (n=2,077)

Highway Shoulder Safety

At least one in five Nova Scotians feel safe cycling or walking along the shoulders of the highway.

Nova Scotians offer mixed opinions in regards to whether highway shoulders are smooth and level with the roadway, with approximately one-half in agreement (47%), and one-half in disagreement (53%). Three-quarters of Nova Scotians disagree when asked if they feel safe cycling on the shoulders of the highway (76%), whereas one-quarter agree (24%). A high majority of Nova Scotians disagree that they feel safe walking or pushing a stroller on the shoulder of the highway (79%).

Highway shoulders are smooth and level: Males and those with a driver's license are significantly more likely to agree.

Feeling safe cycling: Males, those in rural areas, and those without a driver's license are significantly more likely to feel safe cycling on highway shoulders.

Feeling safe walking or pushing a stroller: Males and those who live in rural areas are significantly more likely to agree.

Figure 26

Agreement Ratings for the Following Statements About Highway Shoulders (Q.13a-c) 2012 Only (Overall %)				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Highway shoulders are smooth and level with the roadway (n=2,008)	15%	38%	42%	5%
I feel safe cycling on the shoulders of the highways (n=1,715)	33%	43%	22%	2%
I feel safe walking or pushing a stroller on the shoulders of the highway (n=1,844)	38%	41%	19%	2%

Q.13a-c: Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following general statements about highway shoulders?

Roundabouts

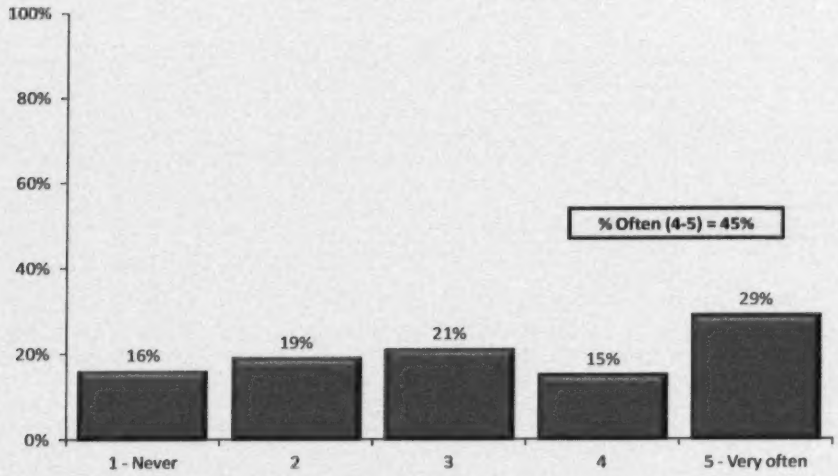
Residents are mixed about the safety of roundabouts, and there remains confusion about how they operate.

Forty-five percent of Nova Scotians have often personally driven through a roundabout in Nova Scotia in the last year. In contrast, 35 percent rarely do. In terms of kilometres driven per year, those who drive less than 1,000 are significantly more likely to never drive through a roundabout. Those who live in rural areas and females are significantly more likely to never drive through a roundabout in the past year.

Figure 27

Frequency of Driving Through a Roundabout in NS

Scale of 1-5, 1 = Never and 5 = Very Often



Q.17: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "never" and 5 means "very often," how often have you personally driven through a roundabout in Nova Scotia in the last year? (n=2,049)

A series of questions were asked about roundabouts. Nova Scotians offer mixed opinion in regards to whether roundabouts are safer to drive through than a regular intersection with traffic lights. Almost one-half agree (49%) and a very similar proportion disagree (51%). A very large majority of Nova Scotians agree that vehicles entering the roundabout should yield to those already in the roundabout (93%). In contrast, six in ten Nova Scotians also declare that vehicles in the roundabout should alternate with vehicles entering the roundabout (57%). This suggests that there remains confusion about the rules of roundabouts. Seven in ten Nova Scotians agree that they feel very comfortable driving through a roundabout in Nova Scotia (69%), whereas three in ten disagrees (31%). Finally, four in ten Nova Scotians have read information about roundabouts in Nova Scotia (38%), whereas six in ten have not (62%).

Figure 28

Agreement Ratings for the Following Statements About Roundabouts (Q.18a-e) 2012 Only (Overall %)				
	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
Roundabouts are safer to drive through than a regular intersection with traffic lights (n=1,953)	22%	28%	32%	18%
Vehicles entering the roundabout should yield to those already in the roundabout (n=1,966)	3%	4%	34%	59%
Vehicles in the roundabout should alternate with vehicles entering the roundabout (n=1,901)	24%	19%	35%	22%
I am very comfortable driving through a roundabout in Nova Scotia (n=1,976)	14%	17%	38%	30%
I have read information on roundabouts in Nova Scotia (n=1,902)	37%	25%	24%	13%

Q.18a-e: Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the following about roundabouts?

Roundabouts are safer than regular intersections: Males are significantly more likely than females to agree.

Vehicles should alternate: Across districts, those who live in the Central district are significantly more likely to disagree than those who live in other districts. Additionally, those who live in urban areas and those with a driver's license are significantly more likely to disagree compared with those in rural areas.

Feel comfortable driving through a roundabout: Males are more likely than females to agree and those who live in urban areas are more likely to agree when compared with those in rural areas.

Have read information about roundabouts: Males are more likely to agree than females.

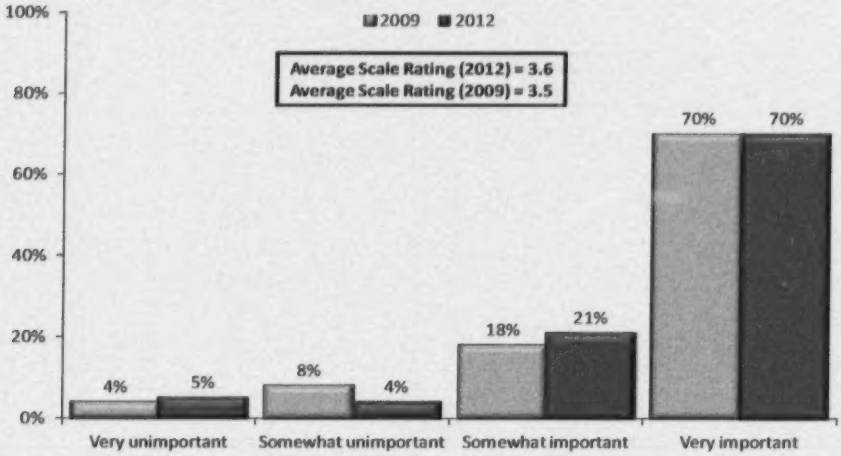
Highway Condition Information

Road condition information is important, and residents like electronic messaging boards for this purpose.

Most Nova Scotians (91%) declare that it is important for them to get information about road conditions during the winter. In terms of gender, males are significantly more likely to declare it is not important compared with females. In comparison with 2009 survey results, Nova Scotians in 2012 are significantly more likely to believe it very or somewhat important to obtain road condition information in the winter (up two percentage points), although the average scale ratings do not differ significantly between the two years (3.5 in 2009 vs. 3.6 in 2012).

Figure 29

Importance of Getting Road Condition Information During the Winter

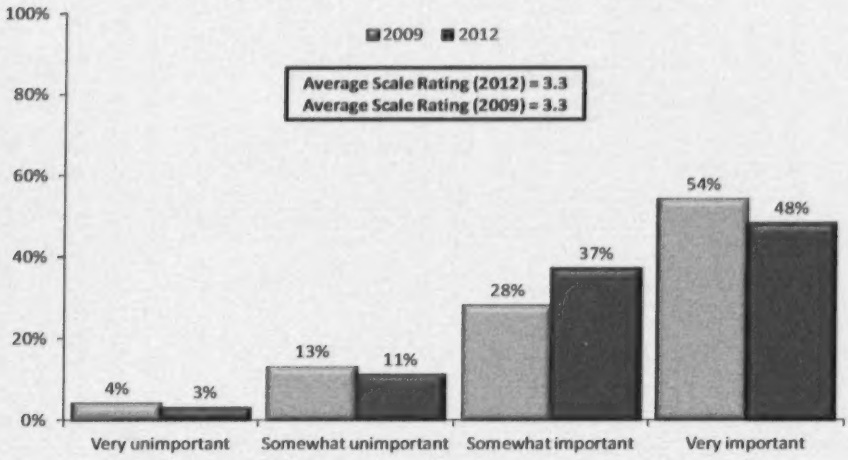


Q.19: How important is it for you to get information about road conditions during the winter? Would you say it is very unimportant, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important or very important? (n=2,089)

Close to nine in ten (86%) Nova Scotians declare that it is important for them to get information about road conditions during construction season, while only 14 percent consider it unimportant. In terms of gender, males are significantly more likely to declare it is unimportant. In comparison with 2009 results, Nova Scotians in 2012 are significantly more likely to believe it is very or somewhat important to get information about road conditions during construction season (up three percentage points), although the average scale ratings do not differ significantly between the two years (3.3 in both years).

Figure 30

Importance of Getting Road Condition Information During the Road Construction Season



Q.20: How important is it for you to get information about road conditions during the road construction season? Would you say it is very unimportant, somewhat unimportant, somewhat important or very important? (n=2,086)

While there are a number of sources used to get road condition information, radio is used most common (83%), followed by web cameras (43%), and the Department's website (36%). A small number use electronic message boards (27%); and 511 road information by telephone (20%); 37 percent report other sources (most commonly television, weather network, word of mouth, and the Internet). The rank order of these sources is similar across districts. In terms of gender, females are significantly more likely to use 511 road information by telephone. Those who live in urban areas are more likely to use electronic message boards, while those in rural areas are also significantly more likely to use web cameras and 511 road information by telephone. Those who drive more than 15,000 kilometres per year are more likely to use web cameras. Those 31 to 60 years of age more likely to use web cameras than those younger or older.

Figure 31

Sources from which You Obtain Road Condition Information (Q.21a-f) 2012 Only (Overall %, n=2,091)			
	Yes, do use that source	No, do not use that source	Don't know/ No answer
Radio	83%	17%	0%
Web cameras	43%	57%	1%
Department of Transportation website	36%	63%	1%
Electronic messaging boards	27%	72%	1%
511 road information by telephone	20%	80%	0%
Any other sources	37%	58%	5%

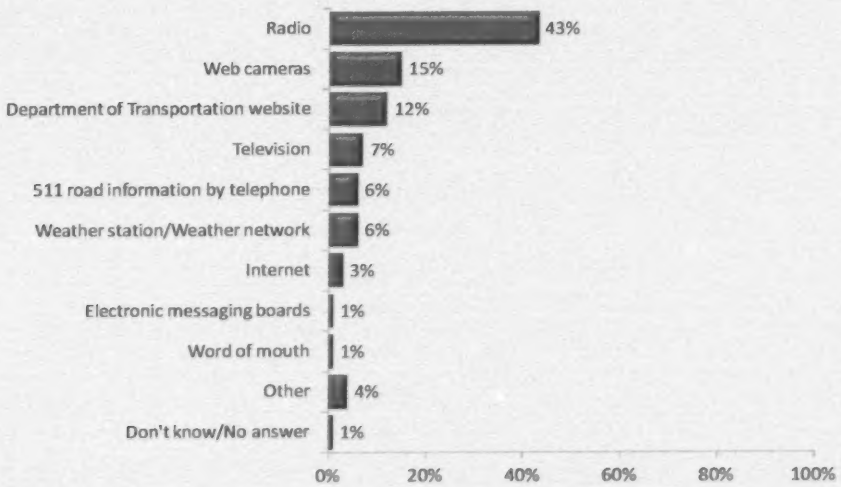
Q.21a-f: From which of the following sources do you obtain road condition information? (n=2,091)

Those who mentioned more than one way of obtaining road condition information were asked to name their preferred source of information. Radio is mentioned most often (43%), followed by web cameras (15%) and the Department of Transportation website (12%).

Figure 32

Preferred Source of Road Condition Information

If Yes to More Than One Source in Q.21a-f

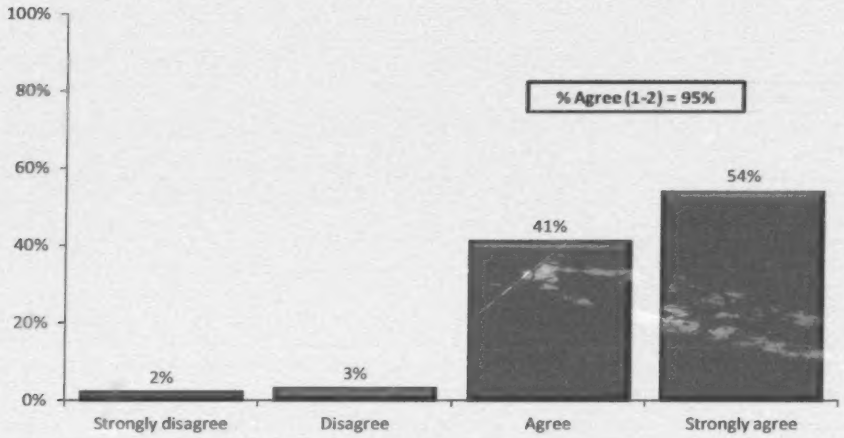


Q.22: [POSE Q.22 ONLY IF YES TO MORE THAN ONE SOURCE IN Q.21a-f] What one source of road condition information is your most preferred source of road condition information? (n=1,620)

Almost all Nova Scotians agree that electronic messaging boards that provide highway conditions are a good way to notify motorists of upcoming road conditions (95%).

Figure 33

Agreement Rating that Electronic Message Boards Are a Good Way to Notify Motorists of Highway Conditions



Q.23: Some highways in Nova Scotia have electronic messaging boards that provide highway conditions to alert motorists of upcoming road conditions. Please indicate whether you [READ RESPONSES IN ORDER] that electronic messaging boards are a good way to notify motorists of upcoming highway conditions. (n=2,027)

Communications

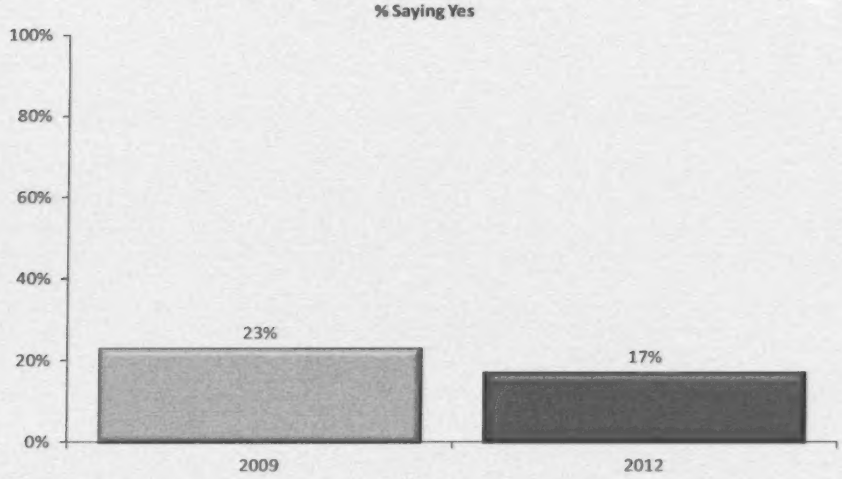
Satisfaction with the information received from the Department is mixed.

Just fewer than two in ten (17%) Nova Scotians have contacted the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal over the past year. Those who drive less than 1,000 kilometres per year are less likely than others to contact the Department. By district, those in Northern (22%) and Western (21%) are significantly more likely to have contacted the Department than those in Central (13%).

Demographically, those who live in rural areas are significantly more likely than those in urban areas to have contacted the Department, while likelihood of contacting the Department increases with the amount driven. The number of residents contacting the Department has experienced a significant decline compared with 2009 (down 6%).

Figure 34

Contacted Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in the Past Year



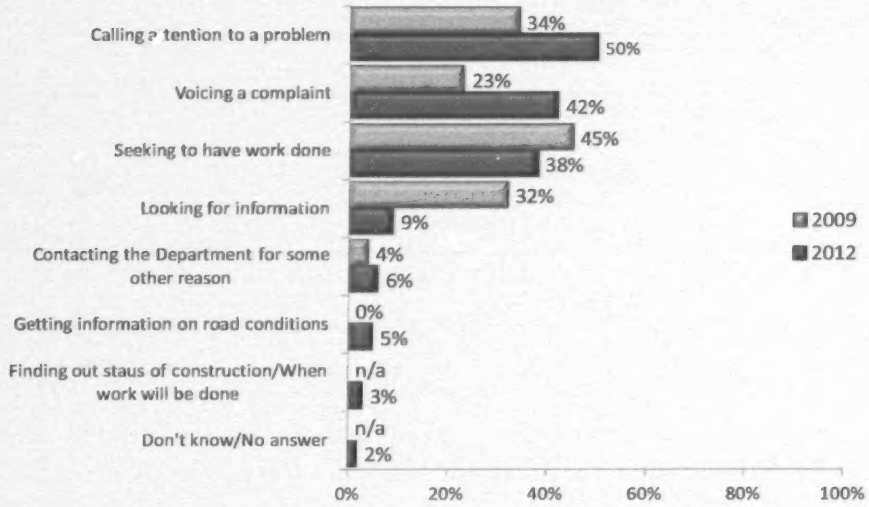
Q.24: Have you contacted the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in the past year for any reason? (n=2,091)

The top three reasons for contacting the Department were to call attention to a problem (50%), to voice a complaint (42%), or seeking to have work done (38%). In comparison to 2009 survey results, 2012 respondents were significantly more likely to declare they contacted the Department to call attention to a problem or to voice a complaint, whereas 2009 respondents were significantly more likely to call seeking to have work done or generally looking to obtain information.

Figure 35

Reasons for Contacting the Department

Key Mentions Among Those Who Said Yes in Q.24



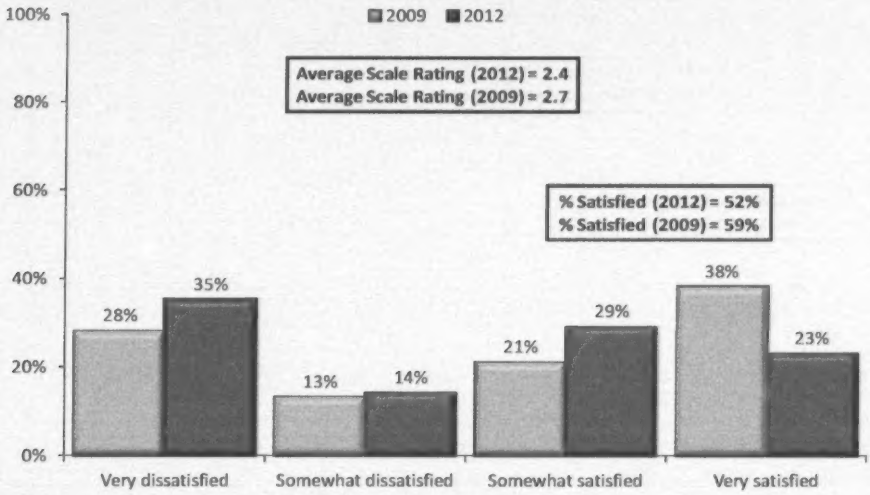
Q.25: [POSE Q.25 ONLY IF YES IN Q.24] When you contacted the Department were you...? (n=379)

One-half (52%) declare they were satisfied with the response they received from the Department, whereas one-half (48%) were dissatisfied. In comparison with 2009 results, there has been a significant increase in dissatisfaction (up 7 percentage points), along with a corresponding decrease in satisfaction (down 7 percentage points). The average scale ratings also exhibit a statistically significant decrease (2.7 in 2009 vs. 2.4 in 2012).

Figure 36

Satisfaction with Information Received from the Department

Among Those Who Said Yes in Q.24



Q.26: [POSE Q.26 ONLY IF YES IN Q.24] Overall, how satisfied were you with the response from the Department? Would you say you were very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied or very satisfied? (n=378)

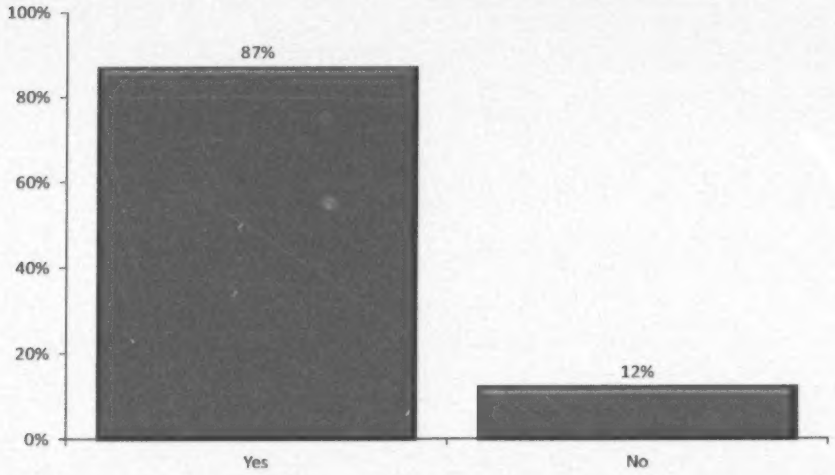
School Zone Speed Limit Changes

The vast majority are aware of speed limit changes in school zones.

Close to nine in ten (87%) Nova Scotians have heard about the speed limit changes in school zones. Those with a license are significantly more likely to have heard about the change. Demographically, those who live in rural areas are significantly more likely than those in urban areas to have heard about the change.

Figure 37

Heard About Changes to Speed Limits in School Zones that Came Into Effect in September 2012



Q.27: Have you heard about the changes to the speed limits in school zones that came into effect in September of this year? (n=2,091)

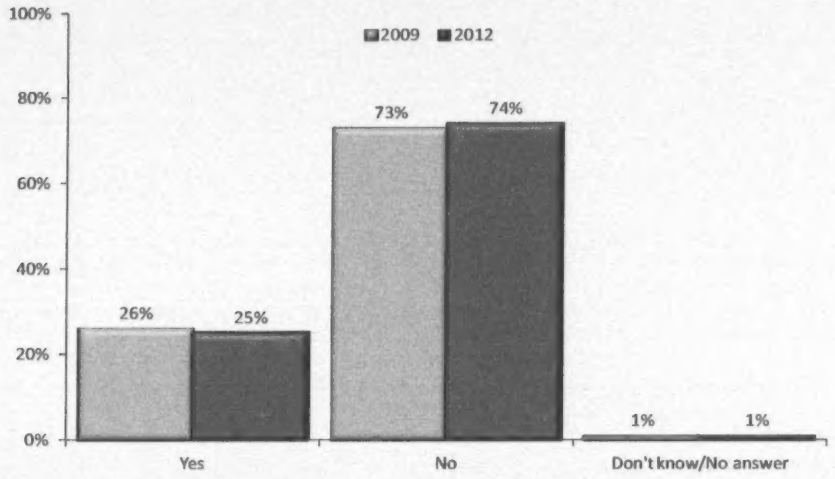
Awareness of Department Approaches

Only a minority of Nova Scotians are aware of the approaches used to determine snow plowing, salting, and sanding.

Three-quarters (74%) of Nova Scotians are not aware of the approach used by the Department to determine when different roads get plowed, which is similar to 2009 results. In terms of gender, males are significantly more likely to be aware. Geographically, those living in rural areas are significantly more likely to be aware.

Figure 38

Awareness of Approach Used to Determine When Different Roads Get Plowed

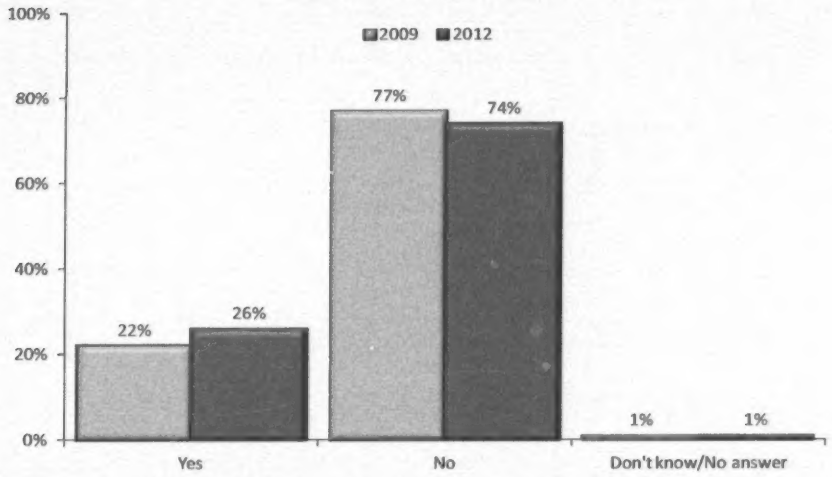


Q.28: Are you aware of the approach used by the Department to determine when different roads get plowed? (n=2,091)

Similarly, three-quarters (74%) of Nova Scotians are not aware of the approach used by the Department regarding salting and sanding. Males and those in rural areas are more likely to be aware than their counterparts. In comparison with 2009 results, 2012 respondents are significantly more likely to be aware.

Figure 39

Awareness of Approach Used Regarding When Salting and Sanding Occur

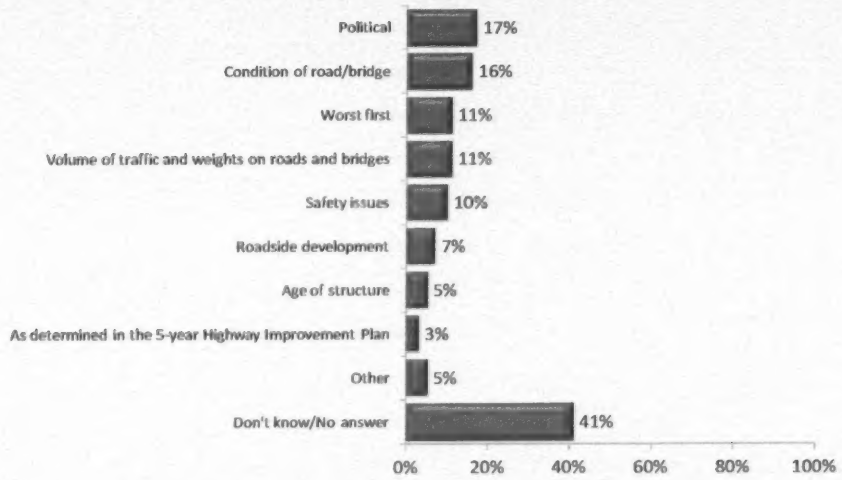


Q.29: Are you aware of the approach used by the Department regarding when salting and sanding occur? (n=2,091)

When asked how they believe the Department selects highway and bridge construction projects, four in ten (41%) responded that they do not know. Two in ten believe decisions are either political (17%) or based on the condition of the road or bridge (16%). Meanwhile, one in ten responded that the worst projects were done first (11%), because of the volume of traffic and weights on roads and bridges (11%), or safety issues (10%).

Figure 40

How You Think the Department Selects Highway/Bridge Construction Projects



Q.30: And next, please tell us how you think the Department selects highway and bridge construction projects? (n=2,091)